

# *The William A. Ashbrook Diaries* **Charter Legacy**

*Numismatic Chronicle from the Diaries of William A. Ashbrook, 1905 – 1920.*

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## Introduction

It has been ninety-five years since President William Howard Taft signed into law the Federal Charter of the American Numismatic Association in May of 1912. Its purpose is seldom brought forth in our modern time, in fact, it is sometimes forgotten, and many collectors are simply unaware of its existence. But that purpose is the very foundation of the ANA and it would be beneficial for ANA members, and non-members alike, to acquaint themselves with it from time to time. Section 3 in the Article of Incorporation states the purpose:

*“To advance the knowledge of numismatics along educational, historical, and scientific lines...to assist in bringing about better cooperation between all persons interested in the coinage, circulation, classification, collection, sales, exhibition, use and preservation of all coins, bills, and medals...and for the particular purpose of bringing the numismatists of America into closer relations with one another, and of promoting friendly feeling for one another through social intercourse, the interchange of ideas and discussions of mutual interest...”*

All numismatists can be thankful that these words were put to paper, lest we forget why we love our hobby. This story is about a man who worked diligently through his passion for numismatics, and his position as a United States Congressman, and Chairman of the House Coinage Committee, to secure the Federal Charter that ensures future generations can enjoy the benefits of the ANA, and on a broader scope, to advance the hobby of numismatics in general.

It is likely that most ANA members first heard of William A. Ashbrook as I had. Upon joining, inevitably, you study about the organization, check out the website, and learn what it's all about. Eventually you

read about the Federal Charter, and Ashbrook is introduced. You learn he is the Congressman who was a coin collector, became a member of the ANA Board of Governors, and the conduit by which the ANA's Federal Charter was obtained. After that, you move on to the business of the ANA, it's many programs and benefits, and Ashbrook becomes a footnote in a sea of information.

In fact, it was a footnote in Roger Burdette's, "Renaissance of American Coinage" that re-introduced me. He cites Ashbrook on several occasions and also mentions his diary. In the process of another research project, I decided I might find some interesting information on my subject in Ashbrook's diary.

My objective was to read the diary from 1905 through 1920 and copy all the numismatic related material in that time frame. These 15 years comprise the height of his interest in coins. The more I read the diary, the more his witness and participation in history, as well as the numismatic content, fascinated me.

He wrote something in his diary every day for over fifty years, covering a wide range of subjects; family, business, Congress, and of course he mentions his passion for coin collecting, and the virtual who's – who of historic American figures and numismatic luminaries that were his acquaintances. Ashbrook



William Albert Ashbrook of Johnstown, Ohio.  
Numismatist and United States Congressman  
(D-Ohio) 1906 – 1920, 1936 – 1940. (1)

## *The William A. Ashbrook Diaries, 1905 - 1920.*



Ashbrook was born and grew up in this house, which was the family homestead. (2)

was a hard working Congressman who went to lengths to understand the thoughts of his constituents. In reading his words, one gets a sense that it was a time when partisanship took a back seat to compromise, polarized bickering gave way to respectful discourse, and a spirit of cooperation among politicians ultimately achieved results. How times have changed. William Ashbrook had great compassion for his fellow man and cared deeply about America. His poignant words concerning our entry into World War I show his genuine commitment to duty, his own convictions, and his internal struggle.

In his Forward he explains preparing the diary for printing in book form, and in the spring of 1930, printing had begun. The diary is printed in four volumes and comprises the years 1886 through 1939, the final volume being completed near the end of his life. His granddaughter explained to me how much he enjoyed passing out copies to friends and family members, and how they treasured having them. I believe the small portion of the diary presented here offers compelling reading for U.S. history buffs, the casual coin collector, or numismatic scholars and researchers.

The Forward and all Diary Entries herein are copied verbatim. Included are some historic events and other interesting items; they are denoted with an \*asterisk. I have made some observations, clarifications, or explanations; they are in *(parenthetical italics)*.

## **Forward**

*The William A. Ashbrook Diaries, "A line a day for forty odd years"*

One day when I was a young man yet in my teens I went with my mother to beautiful Green Hill cemetery to place flowers on the grave of my brother Burt. For days and years after his death, which occurred in May 1885, dear old mother with flowers...trudged...to that hillside, where I too some day expect to rest, and wept bitter tears on that little mound. On that day, I recall, she told me...that her

brother, John Pratt, gave her a diary on her seven-teenth birthday, and how she kept this diary for a considerable time. She expressed deep regret that she had not continued to keep a diary that she might then, in the latter years of her life, have more vivid memory of the events of her early life. The idea of keeping a diary then and there made a deep impression on my mind. A year or more later it took



Ashbrook had this red brick house built for his family. It stands next to the old homestead. Today the homes are owned by his granddaughter, Ann Evans. (3)



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permanent root about Christmas time 1886, while in Newark, I bought my first diary and ever since have made a daily record of the events of the day.

And so I have given the inspiration of my diary formed habit, which has a stranglehold on me...for it has been one of my greatest pleasures for more than forty years to daily commune with my diary. The further thought or rather regret of my mother that she had abandoned a daily record of her life prompts me...to believe that some of the recorded events of my life will be appreciated by my own dear children when they have reached mature years and I have passed on. With this thought in mind I have determined to read over those old diaries, cull out a few lines each day and without frills or furbelows permanently preserve in type. The happenings no doubt of many days will be like those of most folks, unimportant, for every day is not a big day for most of us, but whether or not the days events were of importance, I never failed to fill a page, my natural economy of all things, no doubt, prompting me to waste not even a page of white paper.

## **The Diaries**

### *1907*

*(There were not any numismatic entries for 1905 or 1906. It is unknown when Ashbrook actually became interested in collecting, but clearly, in 1907 coins began to occupy his thoughts on a more consistent basis.)*

**Tuesday, July 23, 1907.**

Tonight I started home with my tin box of old coins and left them at the drug store. Did not think about them until I was in bed but concluded Frank Paige would find them.

**Wednesday, July 24, 1907.**

My box of old coins is gone. They were worth more

than \$200 and it makes me feel sore.

**Friday, July 26, 1907.**

When I went home tonight, I found my box of coins on the side porch. Whoever stole them got alarmed and brought them home, for which I am thankful. Now I have money in my old tin box.



In 1907 a great design change occurred in our country's coinage. Augustus St. Gaudens created the 10 and 20-dollar gold pieces under the direction of President Theodore Roosevelt, Ashbrook enjoyed the new coins, collected them and sold them. (4)

**Friday, December 13, 1907.**

The new St. Gaudens double eagles are just out and are at a premium. I got ten today. *(Based on the date of this entry and the number of coins acquired, it is logical to assume that these St. Gaudens double eagles are of the MCMVII High Relief circulation issues, minted from November 1907 to January 1908. A total of 12,867 were struck and used only for 'official presentation, sale to collectors, and distribution to sub-treasuries', as described by Roger Burdette in 'Renaissance of American Coinage 1905 - 1908', page 265. (2006). These coins typically garner between \$15,000 and \$25,000 in today's market, depending on condition.)*

**Sunday, December 15, 1907.**

Collecting coins is my diversion now.

**Thursday, December 19, 1907.**

The committee assignments were made today. I am on the Coinage, Weights and Measures, and the Militia committees.

## *The William A. Ashbrook Diaries, 1905 - 1920.*

**Friday, December 20, 1907.**

Got several \$3 and \$1 gold coins from the U.S. Treasury and some more of the double eagles. All command a premium.

**Monday, December 30, 1907.**

Ran over to Columbus this morning to do some dickering with Dr. Henderson on coins...

*(Dr. John M. Henderson of Columbus, OH served as a board member and ANA President 1910 - 1911. He was a collector, exhibitor, and possibly Ashbrook's best friend in numismatics. Played a key role in the advancement of the Federal Charter.)*

### 1908

**Tuesday, January 7, 1908.**

William B. McKinley of Illinois, *(not to be confused with the twenty-fifth U.S. president 1897-1901)*, who is chairman of the committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures, entertained the members of the committee at his fine home tonight. Thirteen members present to enjoy an 11 course dinner with three kinds of wine and champagne.



The motto 'In God We Trust' did not appear on the new Saint Gaudens coins by order of President Roosevelt. Ashbrook introduced legislation to reinstate the motto, which won support. The motto was back on the coinage in 1908. (5)

**Monday, January 13, 1908.**

I find much pleasure in adding to my coin collection.

**Tuesday, January 21, 1908.**

I paid \$10 today for a 1799 and an 1804 U.S. penny and now have a complete series.

**Wednesday, January 22, 1908.**

President Roosevelt had 'In God We Trust' removed from our coins. I introduced a bill today to restore the motto to our coins. *(This topic became quite a controversy for Roosevelt. For a more in-depth examination of the 'In God We Trust' legislation, see 'Renaissance of American Coinage 1905 - 1908' by Roger Burdette, pages 192 - 198. (2006))*

**Friday, February 7, 1908.**

Am receiving many letters commending me on my 'In God We Trust' bill.

**Saturday, February 8, 1908.**

Called on my old coin friend Collins, who showed me his private collection of U.S. cents. He values his set of 169 pennies at \$5500. *(Ben Collins of Washington D.C. was at one time employed at the U.S. Treasury. Collector and dealer, he owned a coin and curio store in D.C.)*

**Tuesday, February 11, 1908.**

Was appointed a member of the Assay Commission by President Roosevelt and left this afternoon for Philadelphia.

**Wednesday, February 12, 1908.**

Went out to the U.S. mint this morning. I was made the Chairman of the (Assay) Commission. There were thirteen members present. I appointed the sub-committees and all I have to do is to look on. We were served a fine lunch in the mint. I spent much time looking at the fine collection of coins in the mint cabinet. *(The*

*National Archives reveal that 11 members signed the Assay Commission minutes that day rather than the thirteen Ashbrook mentions. There were ex-officio members present as well which would account for the discrepancy. Thanks to Roger Burdette for National Archives research.)*



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**Thursday, February 13, 1908.**

Director Leach of the Treasury let each member have two of the double eagles and one of the rare eagles of the fifty lot. We finished our duties today. The members did not care for their gold coins and let me have them. *(The 'rare eagles of the 50 lot' are most likely from the abandoned production trial minted between August 24 and September 18, 1907. 31,500 coins were struck of which 31,450 were melted by order of Mint Director Leach for various strike quality reasons. The 50 remaining coins were intentionally held back and distributed by the Treasury Department. The 1907 St. Gaudens eagles are described in great detail including mintages, die pairs, striking, etc. in 'Renaissance of American Coinage 1905 - 1908' by Roger Burdette, pages 240 - 241. (2006) Collectors know these coins today as J-1903 from the reference 'United States Pattern Coins' by J. Hewitt Judd, 8th Edition (2003). Ashbrook says 'the members did not care for their coins and let me have them.' If all of the members present let him have their coins as he*

*states, he would have left his committee meeting that day with no less than 22 MCMVII High Relief double eagles and 11 of the rare 50 lot of eagles! It would be hard to imagine all of the members giving up their coins, but there is no mention to the contrary. However, according to Roger Burdette, it is likely Ashbrook was referring to the \$10 coins only, as the High Relief double eagles were widely known to be worth a substantial premium at the time, but the eagles were almost completely unknown outside of numismatic circles. When one of the 50 eagles goes on the auction block these days it will hammer between \$100,000 and \$250,000 depending on condition.)*

**Friday, February 14, 1908.**

I sold one of my rare eagles to Henry Chapman for \$150 and made \$140, pretty soft. *(Henry Chapman and his brother Samuel Hudson Chapman of Philadelphia, PA were each members of the ANA board of*

*governors. A-list collectors, dealers, and numismatic auctioneers, they also gave a hand in advancing the Federal Charter.)*

**Monday, February 17, 1908.**

Bought a number of coins today and am greatly interested in coinology.

**Wednesday, February 19, 1908.**

The Coinage committee reported the 'In God We Trust' bill to the house. Several others introduced similar bills and McKinley, our chairman, will have



*'The rare eagles of the fifty lot.' Known as the 1907 \$10 Indian Rounded Rim with Periods. (6)*

the honor of the bill although I was the first to introduce it.

**Thursday, February 27, 1908.**

Sold two more gold eagles today and made \$215.

**Monday, July 20, 1908.**

Went over to Columbus on the evening train to attend a meeting of the Ohio Numismatic association and the National Stamp collector's association.

**Tuesday, July 21, 1908.**

Had Dr. Henderson and J.H. Zerbe, who is the president of the American Numismatic Association, lunch with me. I was on the program to talk on the St. Gaudens's coins. The Ohio association elected Dr. Henderson president and I was elected secretary, although I did not want it. *(Farren Zerbe of New York served as Vice President and ANA President 1908 -*

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1909. Editor and one time owner of 'The Numismatist', he was a prolific numismatic writer, collector, and exhibitor. A strong advocate for the Federal Charter.)

**Thursday, July 23, 1908.**

Bought \$430 worth of coins from Omaha and \$60 worth from Warsaw, N.Y. and am fast getting a big collection.

**Sunday, August 2, 1908.**

Have been listing my coins today and pored over them like an old miser. They are mighty good company.

**Saturday, August 8, 1908.**

Ran over to Columbus this afternoon and stayed over to see Dr. Henderson about an auction of old coins.

**Saturday, September 26, 1908.**

I went over to Columbus on the evening train to join Dr. Henderson on a trip to Philadelphia.

**Sunday, September 27, 1908.**

Had lunch with Dr. Henderson at his home. He is a great numismatist. I left with him tonight for Philadelphia.

**Monday, September 28, 1908.**

We arrived at Philadelphia at noon and are stopping at the Stenton, which is headquarters for the American Numismatic Association. We were out to the U.S. mint and called on several coin dealers. Tonight we had a fine dinner at the home of Henry Chapman, who is one of the most noted coin collectors in the U.S.

**Tuesday, September 29, 1908.**

I received a telegram this morning from Jennie advising me that my sister Aura died yesterday of paralysis. Could hardly believe it was true...Attended the morning session (ANA) and responded to the address of welcome. Left for home at 4:30.

**Friday, November 20, 1908.**

Visited my Columbus friends and lunched with Dr. Henderson.

**Saturday, November 28, 1908.**

I went to Columbus today to meet some political friends. Dr. Henderson came home with me to stay over Sunday. We looked at my coins tonight. He is a coin crank, but a mighty good fellow.

**Sunday, November 29, 1908.**

Spent the entire day with Dr. Henderson and my coins. They are good company. I am figuring on having a coin sale to sell my duplicates.

**1909**

**Sunday, January 10, 1909.**

... listing my coins for an auction sale.

**Tuesday, January 12, 1909.**

Sold three of my gold eagles today and made \$56. I get much pleasure with my coins and make money besides.

**Wednesday, January 27, 1909.**

I have become acquainted with the coin dealers and collectors here (*Washington D.C.*) and get much pleasure in associating with them. Congenial spirits always seek each other.

**Monday, February 1, 1909.**

William Hesslein of New Haven, Connecticut was with me this evening talking coins. (*William Hesslein was a prominent coin dealer and auctioneer in New Haven, CT and then in Boston, MA.*)

**Wednesday, February 3, 1909.**

Left a copy with the printer for a fixed priced coin sale.

**Monday, February 7, 1909.**

'Council day' in the house never interests me. I get up each week to talk coins with my old friend Ben Collins on 17th street.

**Monday, February 15, 1909.**

Have received several orders for coins in response to the price list sent out a few days ago, and hope to work off my duplicates.

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**Thursday, February 25, 1909.**

I bought a California slug today of J.C. Mitchelson for \$125. (*Joseph C. Mitchelson of Tariffville, CT was a tobacco dealer and extensive collector of coins and antiques.*)

**Friday, February 26, 1909.**

I sold a flat edge eagle today and made \$105.

**Friday, March 26, 1909.**

Have sold most of my duplicate coins.

**Wednesday, June 2, 1909.**

... I left at 8:20 p.m. on the Pennsylvania for Philadelphia. Dr. Henderson was on the train.

**Thursday, June 3, 1909.**

We arrived in Philadelphia at noon and are quartered at Green's hotel. We came to attend a coin sale by Henry Chapman. It was my first coin sale. Met many of my coin friends. Zerbe, who is the president of the American Numismatic Association, had us take dinner with him. Dr. Henderson is a candidate to succeed Zerbe.

**Friday, June 4, 1909.**

Dr. Henderson took me to all of the curio shops in the city this morning. We attended a coin sale from 1 to 6 p.m. I bought a few lots. It is very interesting. This evening, Hudson Chapman invited us to his home for a fine six-course dinner, with French servants and plenty of style. He has a wonderful collection of Greek coins.

**Saturday, June 5, 1909.**

We were out to the Mint this morning and visited junk and curio shops. Attended the coin sale again this afternoon. I paid \$10.50 for a 1793 penny and also bought a number of other coins.

**Tuesday, June 8, 1909.**

Took Jennie to the Treasury this morning to see how they make money and where it is stored. I held a package of 4000 \$1000 bills, or \$40,000,000 and it did not make me weary.

**Thursday, June 10, 1909.**

Was up to see Collins and talked coins.

**\*Friday, June 11, 1909.**

I was at the White House today to see President Taft present Wilbur and Orville Wright of Dayton, OH medals from the Aero Club. The Wrights have successfully constructed a flying machine...



Ashbrook would have been proud that Ohio natives, Orville and Wilbur Wright have their amazing flying machine depicted on our nation's 25c coin. (7)

**Friday, June 18, 1909.**

I have nearly as much coin mail as Congressional these days.

**Tuesday, June 22, 1909.**

I went over to Philadelphia this morning to attend S.H. Chapman's coin sale, but they sold too high for me. I enjoy the atmosphere and to mingle with the coin cranks.

**Sunday, June 27, 1909.**

Am greatly interested in my coin collection and spend many hours very happily pouring over them.

**\*Tuesday, July 27, 1909.**

Went over to Fort Myer this afternoon...to the aeroplane shed...saw the machine hauled out and pushed to the place where it makes its flight. Sat in a tent with President Taft and for an hour and twelve minutes watched Orville Wright and Lieutenant Lahn soar in the sky. It was the first time I ever saw an aeroplane fly. To me it is the most wonderful invention ever made. I will never forget this day. (*On December 17, 1903 the Wright Brothers made the famed first controlled human flight at Kitty Hawk, NC. In the following years they continued to perfect the 'fixed wing' aircraft and began making public flight demonstrations. Contracts with the U. S. Military depended on successful public flights at Ft. Myer, VA. As Ashbrook attests, the public was thrilled.*)



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This photo was taken of Orville Wright flying above Ft. Myer, VA in September 1908. Ashbrook witnessed virtually the same view at Ft. Myer the following July. (8)

### **Monday, August 2, 1909.**

The new Lincoln cents made their first appearance today and I got a bunch to take home.

### **Wednesday, August 4, 1909.**

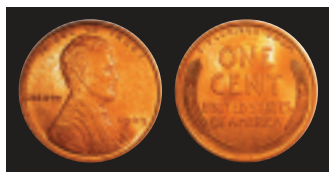
Sent 400 of the new Lincoln pennies to that many friends in the district, today.

### **Tuesday, August 24, 1909.**

Dr. Henderson was elected president of the American Numismatic Association and I was elected one of the Board of Governors. (*Ashbrook would serve as a member of the ANA Board of Governors through 1912*)

### **Friday, September 3, 1909.**

Went over to Columbus this morning to hear from Dr. Henderson the story of the Montreal convention of the A.N.A.



1909 brought a change in design to our one-cent coin, and the Lincoln cent was introduced. Ashbrook sent 400 of them to friends in his district. (9)

### **Sunday, September 5, 1909.**

Have been listing and preparing my coins for the auction sale.

### **Monday, September 13, 1909.**

...went over to Columbus to meet the trustees of the

Ohio State Numismatic Association and we decided to have a meeting and coin sale October 28-29.

### **Tuesday, September 14, 1909.**

Have been sending a coin catalog to every collector and dealer in the U.S. I have more than \$2000 in duplicates in the sale.

### **Saturday, September 25, 1909.**

Dr. Henderson and his wife came over on the evening train and we worked on my coins until midnight.

### **Sunday, September 26, 1909.**

The Doctor spent most of the day with me, shaping up my coins for the auction. He would scarcely leave the coins for a good chicken dinner. Jennie and Mrs. Henderson are very good friends and I am very fond of the Doctor.

### **Saturday, October 16, 1909.**

Bids have commenced to come in for my coin sale.

### **Saturday, October 23, 1909.**

Have been busy with the coin bids, which are now rolling in, and it looks like we would have a big auction sale.

### **Monday, October 25, 1909.**

Have already received 184 bids for our coin sale.

### **Thursday, October 28, 1909.**

Went to Columbus this morning to attend the meeting of the Ohio State Numismatic Association, which was held in the Board of Trade assembly room. We had a fine coin exhibit. Professor Helapleus gave a lecture on ancient Greece this afternoon, and tonight Professor Comparette, the curator of the Philadelphia mint, gave an illustrated lecture. Ben Green of Chicago, and I were the guests of Dr. Henderson tonight. (*Ben Green was a prominent numismatist and storeowner in Chicago, IL, writer and lecturer on numismatic and philatelic subjects. Thomas Louis Comparette was the curator of the U.S. Mint coin cabinet from 1905 until his death in 1923.*)



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**Friday, October 29, 1909.**

We had our great coin sale today. Roy Patton was the auctioneer and Ernest Cornell the clerk. The sale began at 9:30 a.m. and ended at 2:30 p.m. We sold 745 lots, the bulk by mail. Two-thirds of the coins sold were mine, and I am rid of most of my duplicates and at a very nice profit.

**Monday, November 1, 1909.**

Ernest helped me send twenty registered and eighteen express packages of old coins today. Am glad to be rid of the old junk.

**Tuesday, November 15, 1909.**

Knights of Pythias, coins, loans, and congressional correspondence kept me at my desk today.

**Monday, December 6, 1909.**

Called on Collins and my other coin friends after congress adjourned.

### *1910*

**Wednesday, January 12, 1910.**

Was advised of my appointment by President Taft on the Assay Commission.

**Saturday, January 22, 1910.**

Was up to see Collins, my coin friend, this afternoon.

**Saturday, February 12, 1910.**

No session today, Congressman William McKinley had a banquet tonight for the members of the Coinage, Weights, and Measures committee.

*(No more numismatic entries for the year 1910)*

*(It became a difficult and busy year for Ashbrook. On February 13 his mother, Lucy, died. Also around this time and into the spring of 1910 he was suffering from 'gravel of the kidneys'. In addition, it was an election year, and he became interested in the automobile and wrote about his adventures and misadventures with his Ford, an often humorous, love - hate relationship.)*

**\*Sunday, July 31, 1910.**

This morning I took several old people for an auto

ride who had never been in a machine. I get much pleasure in giving people their first ride.



Ashbrook had a love-hate relationship with his 'Tin Lizzie'. (10)

**\*Monday, August 1, 1910.**

The owners of the Ford automobiles had a reunion at Newark today. There were sixty-nine Fords at the Country Club where we had our pictures taken.

**\*Tuesday, August 2, 1910.**

Have had no end of trouble with my Ford today. Water in the gasoline did the mischief and I had a puncture to add to the enjoyment of the day.

**\*Tuesday, August 16, 1910.**

I have trouble nearly every day with the Ford and the automobile in far from being perfect. When the thing goes it is fine, but when it won't, it sure tries my patience.

**\*Saturday, August 20, 1910.**

When the radiator doesn't leak there is water in the gasoline or a puncture, and half my time is taken doctoring the Ford.

**\*Tuesday, August 23, 1910.**

Ran out of gasoline and had to send to Jersey for gas.

### *1911*

**Saturday, January 28, 1911.**

Paid a call to Collins, my old coin friend this afternoon. My interests in coins has subsided somewhat.

**Friday, August 18, 1911.**

I got the District of Columbia committee to report

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out my bill giving a federal charter to the American Numismatic Association.

### **Wednesday, August 23, 1911.**

I bought four gold coins of Milton E. Ailes of the Riggs Bank at a premium of \$320. (*Milton E. Ailes of Washington, DC was a former Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Treasury and high-ranking official of the Riggs Bank in D.C.*)

### **Monday, November 6, 1911.**

Received word today that I had been elected on the Board of Governors of the American Numismatic Association and Dr. Henderson was re-elected its President.

### **Wednesday, November 8, 1911.**

Arrived in St. Louis this morning. I left a box in the sleeper containing gold coins worth \$500. I reported my loss to the company and the precious box was returned to me tonight.

### **Wednesday, November 29, 1911.**

Went to Columbus this morning.... Hoped to get some gold coins at one of the banks but failed. Dr. Henderson had lunch with me at the Neil House.

### **Monday, December 4, 1911.**

Called on Collins and Ben Heid to talk old coins...

### **Wednesday, December 6, 1911.**

Sold my double eagle to H. O. Granberg of Wisconsin today at a profit of \$200. I make my fads pay. (*Henry O. Granberg of Oshkosh, WI was a board member, Chairman of the board of governors, and ANA President 1915 - 1916, a prominent collector and exhibitor. Served on the U.S. Assay Commission with Ashbrook. Also helped draft the Federal Charter.*)

### **Thursday, December 14, 1911.**

The Public Buildings committee decided to report out a bill at this session. Kopp of Wisconsin, is the only coin collector in the House except myself. (*Arthur William Kopp, of Platteville, WI, was a lawyer and Congressman from Wisconsin 1909 - 1912. A coin collector and member of the ANA, he was Ashbrook's*

*key ally in the Federal Charter legislation.*)

### **Wednesday, December 20, 1911.**

Went with Kopp to the treasury this morning to get a few rare coins. (*See Roger Burdette's 'Renaissance of American Coinage 1905 - 1908' page 172, for more about this visit to the Treasury.*)

### **Friday, December 22, 1911.**

I went over to Columbus this morning hoping to get some gold coins at the Capitol City Bank, but was turned down cold. Spent most of the day with Dr. Henderson talking old coins.

## **1912**

### **Tuesday, January 30, 1912.**

Had a very trying experience today. Ben Johnson, the chairman of the District committee, telephoned me that my charter bill to incorporate the American Numismatic Association had been reached and yielded the floor to me. For about three hours I had a running fire of questions with two roll calls. Sisson of Mississippi, and Shackelford of Missouri, tried hard to defeat my bill, but it finally passed by a bare six votes. If it had not been that my card friends stood by me, I would have been licked. The southern members are so afraid the states will lose some of their rights to the Federal Government. Very few charter bills have ever passed Congress, and I have occasion to feel good.

### **Sunday, February 4, 1912.**

This afternoon I had a long call from Deetz, a coin friend, who brought many of his rare coins for my inspection. (*Charles Henry Deetz of Sellersville, PA was a cartographer for the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Washington, DC, collector of large cents.*)

### **Thursday, March 14, 1912.**

Farren Zerbe was here today in interest of the Numismatic bill.

### **Friday, March 22, 1912.**

Hudson Chapman and wife, of Philadelphia, spent the day with me. He is the foremost coin collector in

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the U.S. We conferred with Senator Gallinger (*New Hampshire*), who agreed to make a favorable report to the Senate on our Numismatic charter bill.

### **\*Thursday, March 28, 1912.**

But for the fixed habit of twenty-five years there would be no entry in my diary today. I have pondered much what to do with my old diaries, and if I knew the summons would come before morning, would consign them to ashes, but the unexpected always happens and doubtless some curious eyes will peruse these pages. To such I ask that the mantle of charity be thrown about evidences of my weaknesses, and if there is any good in my life manifested, may it have charitable consideration.

*(Ashbrook could write in prophetic, eloquent language. Here we are, the curious eyes perusing these pages and benefiting from his charity.)*

### **\*Tuesday, April 16, 1912.**

We are awakened at about 2 a.m. by the newsboys



The Titanic tragedy rocked the world on April 15, 1912. Congress held hearings in the aftermath. (11)

crying extra, extra. Soon found that the Titanic, the largest boat in the world, had sunk off Newfoundland, having struck an iceberg, and 1600 passengers had perished. It is an awful disaster.

### **\*Friday, April 19, 1912.**

The House adjourned after five minutes as a tribute of respect and sorrow for the Titanic disaster. The 800,

who were rescued, reached New York last night. The ocean was two and one fourth miles deep where the boat sank. John Jacob Astor, worth \$150,000,000, met the same watery grave as the steerage passengers.

### **\*Monday, April 22, 1912.**

I attended the Senate investigation of the Titanic disaster today and saw the official of the White Star Line, who saved himself, and is so severely criticized.

### **Tuesday, April 23, 1912.**

The Senate passed my Numismatic charter bill this afternoon.

### **Friday, April 26, 1912.**

The A.N.A. members are showering me with compliments over the passage of the charter bill.

### **Monday, August 26, 1912.**

Arrived in Rochester (NY) this morning to attend the American Numismatic Association. Dr. Henderson and all of my coin friends and the coin cranks from all over the U.S. and Canada are here. Our headquarters are at the Rochester hotel. We saw the city today and tonight had a smoker, which lasted until midnight. All who spoke complimented me on securing the federal charter.

### **Tuesday, August 27, 1912.**

The first session of the Association was held this morning. I was made an honorary life member in recognition of the charter bill. This afternoon our party was taken through the Eastman Kodak Co. and in Packards over the city. Spent several hours with Howland Wood and Ben Green, revising the Constitution and by-laws. The coin crowd is a bunch of good fellows. *(Howland Wood of Brookline, MA was a member of the ANA board, collector, writer, and exhibitor, also became the curator of the American Numismatic Societies' numismatic holdings. Also a Federal Charter advocate.)*

### **Wednesday, August 28, 1912.**

The forenoon was taken up by receiving the report of our committee on revision and the election of officers. Judson Brenner of Youngstown, was elected



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President. This afternoon was devoted to the coin exhibits, and tonight we had a big banquet at the Rochester hotel. Dr. French was toastmaster, and many witty toasts were given. Left at midnight with Dr. Henderson for home. (*Judson Brenner of DeKalb, IL and later Youngstown, OH, was a board member, and ANA President 1912 – 1913, collector and exhibitor. Dr. George P. French of Rochester, NY was a collector, exhibitor, ANA Vice President and board member.*)



Praised for his role in the Federal Charter legislation in *The Numismatist*, May 1912. (12)

Monday, September 9, 1912.

Drove to Columbus to talk coins with Dr. Henderson.

Saturday, October 26, 1912.

Dr. Henderson came over tonight to help me catalog my duplicate coins for another coin sale.

Sunday, October 27, 1912.

Was busy every minute of the day with Dr. Henderson cataloging coins.

**Sunday, November 10, 1912.**

... spent my odd time listing orders for my coin sale.

Tuesday, November 19, 1912.

The Ohio State Numismatic Association is holding a convention, and I was with my coin friends tonight. We had a ginger bread and cider social session at Dr. Henderson's.

Wednesday, November 20, 1912.

The coin auction began 10:30, and it was 5 when the sale was ended. There were only twenty present at the sale, but most of the stuff was sold on mail bids. I got rid of most of my duplicates. Swartz, of Wooster, was elected President, and I was again elected Secretary. *(Ohio State Numismatic Association)*

Monday, November 25, 1912.

Sent out over 40 registered packages of old coins this morning.

Thursday, December 5, 1912.

Made the rounds among my coin dealer friends after the House adjourned.

1913

Wednesday, January 8, 1913.

I ran over to Wilmington, Delaware this morning to see Mrs. Galt Smith. Her father was worth millions and left a fine uncirculated collection of gold coins. I bought \$413 worth and have an option on many more. *(Mrs. Elizabeth Galt Smith was the daughter of Edward Bringham Jr. of Wilmington, DE. Mr. Bringham was prominent in the banking, trust, insurance, and railroad industries in Delaware. The family estate 'Rockwood', is on the National Register of Historic Places and is currently a museum, park, and gardens that is open to the public. Mr. Bringham had an extensive collection of gold coinage, of which Mrs. Galt Smith sold only duplicates to Ashbrook after her father's death. Interestingly, the curators of Rockwood were unaware of Bringham's numismatic pursuits previous to my inquiry. They have since uncovered some references to the subject in family documents, and have been generous with supplying information.)*

Friday, January 17, 1913.

I spent three hours in the Treasury looking over a bag of 5000 quarter eagles, but did not find one that I

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wanted. I expect it is foolish, but I enjoy my coin fad.

### **Saturday, January 18, 1913.**

Was over to the Treasury again today and looked over 5000 more quarter eagles, but found none that I wanted.

### **Monday, January 20, 1913.**

I found some more pastime today by going through another 5000 lot of quarter eagles at the Treasury, but it was fishing with no fish.

### **Tuesday, January 21, 1913.**

Went through another bag of quarter eagles today, but in the examination of 20,000 coins, did not find one that I wanted.

### **Thursday, January 23, 1913.**

I paid \$120 today for three rare quarter eagles.

### **Friday, February 1, 1913.**

I went over to Wilmington, Delaware this morning to see Mrs. E. Galt Smith to buy thirty-three gold proof sets, but she said she would cable my offer to her brother in Ireland and advise me in a few days. Her father surely had some beautiful coins, all either proof or uncirculated.

### **Friday, February 7, 1913.**

Mrs. Galt Smith advised me today that she had accepted my offer of \$2000 for the gold proofs. I have the coins sold for \$2500, and will make \$500 in the transaction.

### **Monday, February 10, 1913.**

Received the gold coins from Wilmington and forwarded them to Milwaukee. My fads may be foolish but I make them pay the freight.

*(It is curious that there were no further numismatic entries for 1913, considering the fact that January and February were rather busy. He is becoming more active in Congress, rising in the ranks of his appointed committees, and remaining in control of his banking and farming interests at home. In fact, following this last entry in February 1913, most of the numismatic related*

*information comes by way of the Coinage, Weights, and Measures Committee, and the Assay Commission, which does carry some interest and I have recorded here. For the following years Ashbrook stays in touch with his coinage interest through these committees and seems to occupy his personal leisure time with cards, the theater- which he has enjoyed all along-, and motion pictures.)*

## *1914*

### **Tuesday, May 26, 1914.**

Tom Hardwick, who is the chairman of the Coinage, Weights, and Measures Committee, is running for the Senate, and has turned the committee over to me, as I am the ranking member.

### **Wednesday, May 27, 1914.**

The Coinage Committee was in session most of the day and kept me tied up in the committee.

### **Friday, May 29, 1914.**

If Hardwick is elected to the Senate, I will become the chairman of the Coinage Committee.

## *1915*

### **Monday, January 4, 1915.**

I had charge today of the bill authorizing the coinage of the Panama Exposition Coins. The House passed it.

### **Tuesday, February 9, 1915.**

I left this afternoon for Philadelphia to attend the Assay Commission.

### **Wednesday, February 10, 1915.**

The Assay Commission met at the U.S. Mint at 10 this morning. I was elected chairman of the commission, which relieves me of active duty. Spent most of my time with Comparette at the Mint exhibit. Tonight went with ex-congressman Kopp of Wisconsin and McNeil of Colorado to the theater. *(John L. McNeil was a founder of the First National Bank of Durango, CO.)*

### **Thursday, February 11, 1915.**

The Commission made an inspection of the Mint, enjoyed another elegant lunch, which was served at

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the Mint. At four o'clock the committees made their reports and we adjourned. The duties of the Commission are perfunctory.

*(This last line about the Assay Commission is telling. Even then, when gold and silver coins were abundantly minted, the chairman of the commission felt it was perfunctory. While the commission was still necessary as an overseer, Ashbrook obviously had confidence in the exacting standards of the U.S. Mint.)*

**Wednesday, February 17, 1915.**

Col. J. G. Butler, a Youngstown steel millionaire, came today to have me introduce a bill authorizing the coinage of the McKinley gold dollar. We called on (Treasury) Secretary McAdoo and the Director of the Mint.

**Saturday, February 20, 1915.**

Introduced the McKinley souvenir gold dollar bill today.

*(1915 continues on as a busy legislative year. Ashbrook is on many committees, including the Coinage, Weights, and Measures Committee of which he is chairman, Public Buildings and Grounds, The Ways and Means Committee, The Military and Pension Committees.*



Ashbrook's McKinley commemorative dollar legislation passed in February 1916. (13)

*He was a pioneer in Congress for his Soldier's Pension Bill and many offshoots thereof. The Widow's Pension Bill comes to pass in 1916 and Ashbrook is deluged with letters of praise from military widows across*

*the country. He earned the nickname 'Pension Bill' from his fellow legislators. As the new year begins, the U.S. is on the brink of entering WWI and Ashbrook often expresses his thoughts on the subject in his diary.)*

**1916**

**Monday, February 7, 1916.**

My McKinley gold dollar bill kept me in the House until 3:30 p.m. when it passed with little opposition.

**Thursday, February 10, 1916.**

The Coinage committee met today to consider my bill to fix all weights and measures and place the same under Government control.

**Saturday, February 12, 1916.**

Dr. Henderson of Columbus dropped off to see me on his way home from the Assay Commission.

**\*Saturday, February 12, 1916.**

I judge, do to the war in Europe, the majority of the people favor Preparedness, and I must yield to the majority.

**\*Monday, February 14, 1916.**

Met with the Pension committee and discussed my Widow's Pension Bill. If I could get this bill passed, it would be the biggest thing I have ever done in Congress, and my heart is set to secure its passage.

*(Widow's Pension bill passed during the summer 1916)*

**\*Tuesday, April 18, 1916.**

Congress is on tiptoe in expectancy of the message, which President Wilson will read tomorrow on our relations with Germany. It looks like the U.S. must break diplomatic relations, and we may yet get into the war.

**\*Wednesday, April 19, 1916.**

The Senate and House met in joint session today at 1 o'clock to hear the President's message on the German submarine situation. He has notified Germany that unless she ceases submarine warfare on neutral and non-combatant boats, that diplomatic relations will cease. We are near a break and close to war. I hope and pray we will not become involved in the world war.

**\*Friday, April 21, 1916.**

Have received a number of telegrams from German



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sympathizers protesting against war. I would like to keep out of the war as much as my German friends, but I will follow the flag and keep it untarnished. There is no back down now.

**\*Wednesday, September 13, 1916.**

I had over 200 letters today from Soldier's widows from everywhere, pouring out their praise.



President Woodrow Wilson asks the House and Senate to declare war on Germany, April 2, 1917. (14)

**\*Friday, September 15, 1916.**

The same old story, nothing but pension letters by the hundreds. I am sure that I already have received letters from every state in the union about my pension bill. The prayers and gratitude of these old widows cheer me and make my work lighter.

**\*Friday, September 22, 1916.**

Hardly able to reply to all the letters received today. I really enjoy reading the hundreds and thousands of letters from these old widows.

1917

**\*Saturday, January 7, 1917.**

Had calls from more than a dozen Members today who wanted me to help them with their pension bills. I am regarded as the pension expert.

**\*Wednesday, February 21, 1917.**

(Prohibition) This was a red-hot day in the House. The amendment, which makes the states absolutely bone dry, was passed by a vote of 321 to 72. I voted for it.

**\*Monday, February 26, 1917.**

The President came to a joint session of Congress at 1 p.m. today and asked that he be given the right to declare war, arm our merchant ships, and be given a liberal appropriation placed at his disposal. It is too much authority for any one man, and equal to the Czar in Russia, and I hope the Republicans will filibuster against it.

**\*Sunday, April 1, 1917.**

I never regretted that I was a member of Congress before. I do hate to vote for war. It seems such a foolish thing to do to plunge this nation into war, but there seems to be no



America Enters World War I in 1917, much to the trepidation of Congressman Ashbrook. (15)

escape, and we must stand by the President. I fear when it is too late, we will see the folly.

**\*Monday, April 2, 1917.**

At 8:30 tonight the House and Senate met in a joint session to hear President Wilson's message on war. He asked that the U.S. declare war on the Imperial Government of Germany. It made me heartsick. It seems so foolish but there is little doubt within a few days Congress will pass a resolution declaring a state of war exists. Billions of dollars will be spent, tens of thousands of lives will be lost, and all for what? I felt so depressed that I could not cheer a single utterance of the President and yet I know we can't back down. It is a terrible thing to take our boys from useful

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pursuits and shed their blood. I fully realize what war means and hate that I must vote for it.

### **\*Wednesday, April 4, 1917.**

The Senate commenced debate on the war resolution today and I listened to the debate for several hours. I will vote for it in the House, but I want to tell my diary that I feel that it is a great blunder to declare war. Not counting the billions of cost and the thousands of lives, the after effects may be still worse, and I feel serious and lasting internal strife. I will subordinate my own conscience and conviction to stand by the



WWI soldiers getting a reprieve in the trenches. (16)



What Ashbrook feared most was the loss of American lives. (17)

President and the press, which almost unanimously favor it, for I feel that it is the duty of a Representative to voice the will of the majority. I hope my own convictions are wrong.

### **\*Thursday, April 5, 1917.**

The House met at 10 a.m. and debated the war resolution until 3 a.m. I was on the floor of the House for fourteen hours and listened intently to every speech for and against. It was with a heavy heart but with a full sense of duty that I voted to declare war on Germany. The vote was 373 for and 50 against. We are now to enter a war, which in my opinion will make even the Civil War a skirmish. I pray to God we have acted wisely and well. It has hung over me like a horrid nightmare for days, and I have wakened at night many times with cold beads of perspiration. The future alone can tell what this day means to our history and fortune.

### **\*Friday, April 6, 1917.**

Nothing talked today but war. The first call will be for a million men and three and a half billion dollars. These figures are astounding and make me wonder even more whether it is worth the price. But there is no use lamenting now. We are at war. We must wage such a war that will make the world take notice. The letters and telegrams I have received today commend my vote. Manufacturers, millionaires, and speculators like war, but how about the mothers who must give up their sons? I don't count myself a pacifist, but I do realize somewhat the awful sacrifices of war.



Imagine what Mr. Ashbrook thought when the offspring of the Wright Brothers wonderful invention were now being used for warfare. (18)

### **\*Monday, April 9, 1917.**

It looks like the President would force Congress to pass a conscription bill, although 90 percent of the Members favor volunteers.

### **\*Thursday, April 12, 1917.**

My mail is all for and against conscription and universal military training. Personally, I am not friendly to either, but if the President demands both, I suppose we will apply the rubber stamp.



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**\*Sunday, April 15, 1917.**

I have not made up my mind that we should try conscription without first giving an opportunity for volunteers, but there is good argument in favor of conscription, and I suppose we will mind the President.

**\*Monday, April 16, 1917.**

War war, morning, noon, and night. That is all we hear or think about.



Design changes to the Standing Liberty quarter were considered by Ashbrook's Coinage committee. The House and Senate ultimately passed the bill. (19)

**\*Tuesday, April 17, 1917.**

The President and War department demand straight conscription. I sent a telegram to every newspaper in my district asking for an expression on conscription, and will abide by the will of the majority. The past two months have been more wearing on me than my previous ten years of service. We are spending money like drunken sailors, and fast swinging into militarism.

**\*Wednesday, April 18, 1917.**

The House passed a bill today to permit our allies to come into the U.S. to recruit aliens. Wilson is Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy and also of the Congress. He is a determined, willful, pedagogue, and cracks the whip with relish.

**\*Thursday, April 19, 1917.**

Received thirty telegrams today and all but two, favor conscription. I want to know how the rank and file feels on this question even though I know I will have

to vote as the President dictates.

**\*Friday, April 20, 1917.**

My mail is so heavy that it is simply impossible to answer it, but I will not complain, for I invited it. I was somewhat up in the air, but now I am settled on my feet, and will vote for conscription and stand by the President.

**Thursday, May 17, 1917.**

Had my committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures meet this morning to consider the bill to change the design of the silver quarter. (*This is the start of legislation to make minor changes to Hermon MacNeil's Standing Liberty quarter on both the obverse and reverse. Contrary to erroneous speculation that the changes to the obverse were to be made because public outcry demanded that Miss Liberty cover her breast, there is nothing in the*

*national archives or contemporary newspapers to support such a claim. The alterations were made for artistic purposes. See 'Renaissance of American Coinage 1916 -1921', by Roger W. Burdette, (2005) pages 75-89.)*

**\*Friday, May 18, 1917.**

The President signed the conscription bill today and now all males between 21 and 30 must register. I hate war so badly that it is hard for me to vote for any war measures.

*(Ashbrook's father dies June 2, 1917)*

**Monday, June 25, 1917.**

My bill to change the design of the silver quarter dollar came up today and after a rather rough experience in the House, it was passed.



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1918

**Wednesday, February 6, 1918.**

Judson Brenner of Youngstown, who was A.N.A. president when I had it's charter bill passed by Congress, had lunch and dinner with us, and tonight we went with him to see 'Over the Top', a dandy little musical comedy.

**Wednesday, February 13, 1918.**

The Assay commission met at the U.S. Mint at 10:00 this morning. I was elected Chairman of the commission and at once appointed the subcommittees on counting, weighing and assaying. Thirteen members were present. The lunch served at the Mint was very fine.

**Thursday, February 14, 1918.**

Was at the Mint at 9 this morning. I wrote the resolutions while the commission worked. Another of those incomparable lunches was served in the Mint. We were shown through the Mint after lunch and at 4 p.m. our labors were over; my fourth appointment on the Assay Commission and by far my most enjoyable.

**Thursday, March 7, 1918.**

The Coinage committee met today and authorized me to report the bill authorizing the coinage of a half dollar for the Illinois centennial celebration.

**\*Friday, March 8, 1918.**

Five more of my special pension bills passed today, that makes forty since December 1st. I am sure getting the old soldiers cared for.

*(In May of 1918 it is discovered Ashbrook's wife, Jennie has breast cancer, she has several operations.)*

*(November 5, 1918, Ashbrook barely survives the election, almost treating it as a loss. He already talks about what will happen in two years.)*

**\*Tuesday, November 5, 1918.**

Was up at 5 and at the polls before they were opened. I stood at the polls all day and tried to have a word with every voter. Went to the 'Advocate' office. The returns came in bad. Lost from 8 to 20 votes in each

Newark precinct, saloon vote. It did not look like I would have over 1500 majority in the District.

**\*Wednesday, November 6, 1918.**

We (*democrats*) have lost the House and Senate and I will have to give up my chairmanship and fine offices.

**\*Thursday, November 7, 1918.**

Had a pretty close call. Will keep close watch and if conditions are not better in two years, will quit. Fourteen years in Congress is not bad anyway.

**\*Friday, November 8, 1918.**

Hardly as many congratulations as usual. If I were sure that I would not run in two years, I would ease up a bit and get a little pleasure. I have always worked like a dog. The House is gone. Goodbye fine offices, extra clerks and chairmanship.

**\*Monday, November 11, 1918.**

About 5 this morning we were awakened by the cry, extra, extra. We got up, bought a paper and found the Kaiser had abdicated, Germany had signed the armistice and the war was over. It surely was the best news I ever heard. The town had gone mad, never heard so much noise before. The people were wild with delight, as well they should be. The phone rang several times and I was told I must go down to Centerburg and make a peace speech. I tried to refuse, but Jennie said I was a public man and must go. I spoke from the steps of the Centerburg Savings Bank to a crowd that was wild with joy. Jennie said I did the best I ever did in my life.

1919

*(Ashbrook enters 1919 with some apprehension. While pleased that the war has ended, he knows his beloved Jennie will die, and his strength as a Congressman appears weakened by the previous election.)*

**Monday, February 3, 1919.**

Appointed to the Assay Commission again.

*(Spring 1919, Jennie Ashbrook dies of complications from breast cancer. They were married thirty years and have no children.)*

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**Tuesday, December 16, 1919.**

Got up in fine spirits, but at 9:30 received a wire that my bank was robbed last night. Was undecided whether to go home, but by noon a four-horse team could not have held me. Greatly worried for fear the safety deposit boxes were rifled. Got leave of absence from the House.

**Wednesday, December 17, 1919.**

The morning paper said loss was \$40,000, but knew that was too high. The bank was crowded with people and has been since the robbery. Four fellows did the job. Cas Brush was passing the bank corner about midnight when he was ordered to put up his hands, taken in the bank, hands and feet tied and blindfolded and required to lie on the floor until daylight while they worked. A hole was burned in the Manganese safe with an acetylene torch, but the fire from the torch burned the currency so badly, little was taken and several thousand dollars left on the floor. About all they got was the gold and silver and the basket of my household silver and two boxes of coins from my collection. The loss of my coins I had spent years collecting, will reach \$2500, and my silver including the N.E.A.'s will amount to easily \$1000. Had nearly 100 souvenir spoons collected from all over the world. Money would not have bought them. None of the deposit boxes were molested. Fully \$100,000 of Govt. bonds were overlooked. It was bad, but might have been much worse.

**Thursday, December 18, 1919.**

Five safe men were here today. They say it is the first case known where the torch burned a Manganese safe. The vault door has a hole burned in it and watchers will have to sit up nights until a new door arrives. People have been very kind, and business goes on just the same although at much disadvantage.

**Tuesday, December 23, 1919.**

Safe expert came from Cleveland this morning and settled the loss and got a draft for \$10,928.36, but made me no allowance for my stolen coins or household silver. A load is lifted that the settlement is made and very satisfactory.

**Tuesday, December 30, 1919.**

More than half of my coin collection was stolen, and it is well that I did not put all my eggs in one basket of all would have been stolen. I will never have much heart again to collect old coins.

*(And so ends William A. Ashbrook's coin collecting pursuits. According to Mrs. Evans, what little remained of the collection was again stolen years later.)*

**\*Wednesday, December 31, 1919.**

The last day of 1919 has finally come and I am glad of it for it has been a year of great trials. The poet expresses my feelings as I write the last page in the following lines:

Life's shores are shifting  
Every year,  
And we are seaward drifting  
Every year.  
Old places, changing fret us;  
The living more forget us;  
There are fewer to regret us  
Every year.  
But the truer life grows nigh-er  
Every year.  
Earth's hold on us grows lighter  
And the heavy burdens lighter  
And the dawn immortal brighter,  
Every year.

-May there be brighter and better things in store for me in the new year is my fervent hope and prayer.  
Adieu.

*(This was a fitting place to conclude my search for his personal numismatic entries, as he had decided to give up collecting coins. There are a few more entries pertaining to the Coinage Committee and the Assay Commission. In 1920 he married his second wife, Marie, and they began a family of 6 children. 1920 also marked the end of his fourteen-year run in the House of Representatives. He continued in the newspaper, banking, agriculture, and farming businesses. Re-entered politics and was elected to the House in 1935 and served until his death at age 72 on January 1, 1940.)*

### **SOME STATISTICS:**

Ashbrook, William Albert

Born near Johnstown, Ohio, July 1, 1867.

Attended Johnstown Public Schools and Bartlett's Business College, Lansing, Michigan.

1884 founded The Johnstown Independent Newspaper, also engaged in banking.

1888 Instituted the Johnstown chapter of the Knights of Pythias.

1889 Marries Jennie Belle Willison. They have no children.

1889 Founds the Johnstown Building and Loan Bank.

1893 – 1897 Serves as Postmaster of Johnstown.

1904 Enters politics (democrat) and wins seat to the Ohio House.

1906 Elected to the U.S. House serving seven terms, defeated in 1920.

1909 – 1912 Member of the ANA Board of Governors

1919 Wife Jennie dies.

1920 Marries Marie Swank. They have six children.

1934 Re-enters politics and wins U.S. House seat. Serves 1935 – 1940.

1940 Dies January 1, 1940.

Involved in agriculture throughout life, amassed 2200 acres and several farms. Was an active member in the Baptist Church, the Pythias, Masons, Elks, Oddfellows, and Eagles. A coin collector, collector of spoons, card player, theater-goer.

### **CITATION**

Permission to publish portions of the William A. Ashbrook Diaries was graciously granted in a verbal conversation by his granddaughter, Anne Evans of Johnstown, Ohio.

I used a copy of the William A. Ashbrook Diaries that is in the holdings of the Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio, in cooperation with David Roepke, Ashland University Archives, Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio. Information about Henderson, Zerbe, Brenner, Granberg, Chapmans, Hesslein, Wood, Mitchelson, Collins, Green,

Comporette, and French was obtained from; 'The American Numismatic Association Centennial History' in two volumes, by Q. David Bowers (1991)

Information about Kopp was obtained from; [www.bioguide.congress.gov](http://www.bioguide.congress.gov); 'Renaissance of American Coinage 1905-1908', by Roger W. Burdette (2006) p.172; 'The Numismatist, History, By-Laws, and Membership', an ANA publication (1964)

Information about Deetz was obtained from; [www.history.noaa.gov/cgsbios](http://www.history.noaa.gov/cgsbios).

Information about Ailes was obtained from; [www.scripophily.net/rignatbanwas.html](http://www.scripophily.net/rignatbanwas.html)

Information about Galt Smith and Bringham were obtained through the generous cooperation of the Rockwood Mansion Park and Museum, Wilmington, DE; Robin Goldstein, Docent. Please visit [www.rockwood.org](http://www.rockwood.org)

Information about St. Gaudens coinage can be found in 'Renaissance of American Coinage 1905 – 1908, by Roger W. Burdette (2006) and also 'Pattern Coins, Experimental and Trial Pieces' by J. Hewitt Judd, M.D. 8th Edition (2003)

Please visit [www.money.org](http://www.money.org); to read the ANA Federal Charter in its entirety.

Information about Paige, Heid, and Helapleus were not found.

Any mistakes in re-typing the diary are my own.

### **PHOTO CREDITS:**

(1, 2, 3) Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green University

(4, 5, 6) [harrybassfoundation.org](http://harrybassfoundation.org)

(7) [statequarters.com](http://statequarters.com)

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